

What is claimed is:

1. A substantially purified polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-6 and fragments thereof
2. A substantially purified variant having at least 90% amino acid identity to the amino acid sequence of claim 1.
3. An isolated and purified polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide of claim 1.
4. An isolated and purified polynucleotide variant having at least 70% polynucleotide sequence identity to the polynucleotide of claim 3.
5. An isolated and purified polynucleotide which hybridizes under stringent conditions to the polynucleotide of claim 3.
6. An isolated and purified polynucleotide having a sequence which is complementary to the polynucleotide sequence of claim 3.
7. An isolated and purified polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:7-12 and fragments thereof
8. An isolated and purified polynucleotide variant having at least 70% polynucleotide sequence identity to the polynucleotide of claim 7.
9. An isolated and purified polynucleotide having a sequence which is complementary to the polynucleotide of claim 7.
10. An expression vector comprising at least a fragment of the polynucleotide of claim 3.
11. A host cell comprising the expression vector of claim 10.

12. A method for producing a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-6 and fragments thereof, the method comprising the steps of:

- 5           a)     culturing the host cell of claim 11 under conditions suitable for the expression of the polypeptide; and
- b)     recovering the polypeptide from the host cell culture.

13. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the polypeptide of claim 1 in conjunction with a suitable pharmaceutical carrier.

10           14. A purified antibody which specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 1.

          15. A purified agonist of the polypeptide of claim 1.

15           16. A purified antagonist of the polypeptide of claim 1.

          17. A method for treating or preventing a disorder associated with decreased expression or activity of HEPI, the method comprising administering to a subject in need of such treatment an effective amount of the pharmaceutical composition of claim 13.

20           18. A method for treating or preventing a disorder associated with increased expression or activity of HEPI, the method comprising administering to a subject in need of such treatment an effective amount of the antagonist of claim 16.

25           19. A method for detecting a polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1-6 and fragments thereof in a biological sample, the method comprising the steps of:

          (a)     hybridizing the polynucleotide of claim 6 to at least one of the nucleic acids in the biological sample, thereby forming a hybridization complex; and

30           (b)     detecting the hybridization complex, wherein the presence of the hybridization complex correlates with the presence of the polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide in the biological sample.

          20. The method of claim 19 further comprising amplifying the polynucleotide prior to  
35 hybridization.